

## **REMARKS**

Please reconsider the application in view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks. Claims 4-6 and 8-48 are pending in the application. In the Office action mailed April 10, 2006, claims 5, 6, and 25-48 were allowed. Additionally, claims 9-12, 15-17, and 20-24 were objected to. Finally, claims 4, 8, 13, 14, 18, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,210,249 to Stadlbauer or U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0041496 to Smirnov.

### **Allowable Subject Matter**

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 5, 6, and 25-48 were allowed.

### **Claim Objections**

Applicants have rewritten claims 9, 15, 17, 20, and 22-24 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, applicants request withdrawal of the objections of claims 9-12, 15-17, and 20-24.

### **Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102**

Applicants disagree with the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,210,249 to Stadlbauer or U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0041496 to Smirnov. In the interest of advancing prosecution, however, applicants have cancelled claims 4, 8, 13-14, and 18-19, without prejudice.

The above amendments and remarks are believed to fully address the Examiner's rejections, and to place the entire application in condition for allowance. A prompt

indication of the same is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephonic interview.

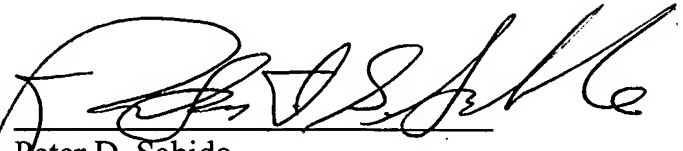
Respectfully submitted,

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on April 17, 2006.

  
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